

THE BAPTIST RECORD

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Mississippi CP reaches new heights in '01

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi Baptists in January shattered their longstanding Cooperative Program (CP) record and surpassed the \$3 million level for the first time ever, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson.

Mississippi Baptists gave to the work of the Lord a total of \$3,214,115 in January 2001, handily exceeding the previous record of \$2,922,651 set in January 1997 by 9.97%.

"In response to the largest CP giving month in Mississippi history, I exclaim, 'Thanks be to God for his blessings to and through Mississippi Baptists,'" Futral said.

"We ended the year 2000 strong, and it is clear that some of the gifts that produced this record-setting month in 2001 came from the overflow in December. To some degree, that often happens in January, so there must be another dimension at work.

"In this case, I believe it is the wonderful, caring, missionary spirit of Mississippi Baptists," he pointed out.

The January 2001 total also exceeded the amount given in the same period last year by \$635,609, or 24.65%, and gave MBCB a strong start toward meeting the record 2001 CP budget of \$30,047,997 that was set by messengers to the 2000 Mississippi Baptist Convention.

"Mississippi Baptists have crossed a new threshold in

missions support by breaking through the \$3 million barrier," said David Michel, MBCB associate executive director for missions extension who also serves as the state's CP director.

"I believe it symbolizes a new era in mission responsiveness which will honor the Lordship of Christ over our lives and in our churches," he said.

Mississippi Baptists came close to breaking the January 1997 giving record on several occasions, including \$2,912,792 in August 2000 and \$2,848,922 in December 1999.

The 2000 Mississippi CP budget cycle, which ran from January to December, recorded ten months with giving in excess \$2 million and six months with giving in excess of \$2.5 million.

The then-record 2000 Mississippi CP budget of \$28,083,349, was topped by \$844,089, or 3.01%. Mississippi Baptists have a history of exceeding record budgets, having done so for seven consecutive years.

SBC COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Giving to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) CP in January 2001 was 5.7% below the total for January 2000, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

A total of \$15,576,822.05 was received in January to support Southern Baptist CP missions and ministries globally and across North America, compared to the \$16,518,423.15 received in January 2000.

For the SBC fiscal year to date (October 2000 through January 2001) CP giving is .29% ahead of the same period a year ago, \$59,214,895.73 as compared to \$59,044,455.38.

In designated giving during January 2001, the total of \$19,477,495.88 was 20.82% below January 2000's \$24,599,243.22. For the

fiscal year to date, designated giving is 13.36% below last year's pace, \$29,524,093.72 as compared to \$34,075,815.65.

For the SBC CP Allocation Budget, the year-to-date receipts of \$59,214,895.73 are \$3,216,100.73, or 5.74%, above the budgeted \$55,998,795.00. The monthly receipts showed the \$15,576,822.05 received as 11.27% above the budgeted amount of \$13,999,698.75.

Designated giving includes the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions, world hunger, and other special gifts.

The SBC CP total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions, and fellowships for distribution according to the 1999-2000 CP Allocation Budget.

THE CP SYSTEM

The CP system is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the SBC.

Under the CP system, local churches retain a percentage of gifts from their members to fund work in their area and send the remainder as CP gifts to state/regional conventions.

The state/regional conventions retain a percentage of CP gifts they receive from the churches to support work in their areas, and send the remaining funds to the SBC Executive Committee for national and international ministries.

Budgets and CP percentages for local churches are the responsibility of those congregations, while messengers from local churches to the annual meetings of the state/regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention set the budgets for those organizations.

MC president to retire after successor is named

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi College (MC) President Howell W. Todd announced February 5 that he will retire after seven years at the Baptist-affiliated school in Clinton, to spend more time with family and get involved in volunteer projects.

Todd, 57, is credited with rebuilding the school's image after former president Lewis Nobles entered a guilty plea in 1993 to federal charges of embezzling millions of dollars donated to the school.

Todd also changed the face of the MC campus, initiating major new construction and renovation projects after a successful fund-raising drive that garnered nearly \$100 million for the school.

"I have informed the board of

trustees of my intention to step down as president sometime within the next twelve months — appropriately timed as the board identifies a replacement.

"After devoting more than 36 years to the field of education, I am looking to redirect my life and my energies to personal priorities that I have not had the luxury of time to adequately address," Todd

said in a statement released by the school on the afternoon of February 5.



Todd

He explained his priorities include a return to his family roots in Huntington, Tenn., where his widowed mother lives, and becoming more deeply involved in local church ministries, Habitat for Humanity projects, and adult literacy programs. "We hate

to see Dr. Todd leave MC. He has done a tremendous job leading the university and has made so many positive things happen here," said Tommy Allen, the school's national alumni association president.

Todd and the school weathered a financial crisis in 2000 when deep budget cuts were ordered after accounting errors resulted in a shortfall of about \$3 million.

"I've had tough years in the past in South Dakota and Tennessee (while working for the governing agencies of those states' institutions of higher learning). It goes with the territory.

"I feel confident about the future of MC and the way we are positioned. We have an excellent faculty and staff," he told The Clarion-Ledger newspaper in Jackson in a February 6 front-page article.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

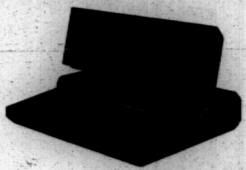
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**William H.
Perkins Jr.**
Editor

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William H. Perkins Jr.

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Postmaster: Send changes of address to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send news, communication, and address changes to The Editor, BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 (601) 968-3800. Fax: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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Do we need the government's help?

President George W. Bush, in one of the first actions of his young administration, has announced the establishment of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

The new federal office is the centerpiece of a 17-page plan Bush released Jan. 29, entitled Rallying the Armies of Compassion. The office will coordinate social service programs between U.S. government agencies and religious organizations, and the President has appointed a Jew and a Roman Catholic to head the effort.

The plan also calls for an expansion of the charitable tax deduction and directs major federal departments to remove impediments to working with private charity and religious groups in the delivery of social services.

"We will not fund the religious activities of any group, but when people of faith provide social services, we will not discriminate against them," Bush said.

The President specifically mentioned such programs as drug rehabilitation and response to homelessness as the types of services provided by religious organizations that could be assisted by the new office.

Declaring that government efforts will never be completely replaced by charities, he nonetheless pointed out, "My administration will look first to faith-based programs and community groups, which have proven their power to save and change lives."

Many Southern Baptists are involved in such programs on the local church, associational, state convention, and national convention levels. The president's proposal will come as good news to those groups who struggle under an enormous caseload and limited funding to respond in a Christian way to the needs of the less fortunate.

Bush's directive is certainly a radical change in federal government policy, which has tended to shut out faith-based



groups because of concerns over church-state separation.

If the President's plan indeed provides support for faith-based organizations' social services without funding overt religious activities, there shouldn't be a problem with avoiding church-state entanglements — and it should provide a real boost to the people and groups who are trying their hardest to alleviate the problems of the most vulnerable segments of American society.

However, religious groups should be wary of becoming too dependent on government largess. Other sectors of American society have made that mistake and paid the price, ultimately ceding control to shifting political philosophies as one administration exits and another assumes power.

In Washington, policies can change overnight and if a group that has come to depend on federal funding wants to continue receiving that funding, it must conform to

the new way of doing things. Good ideas have a way of getting lost in Washington.

If the President's proposal revolutionizes the manner in which social services are provided in this country, we should be grateful — but let's not be naive.

Think about this, too: taking care of the poor and needy is a Christian responsibility. Period. We're supposed to be doing that on our own, regardless of what the rest of the world chooses to do.

If we were truly living up to our call as Christians, there would be much less need for the government to be involved. It is our failure in this regard that is at least partially responsible for the government's intervention in the first place.

As a Christian, are you doing our part? Pray, be open to the Lord's leading in this area of your life, and you will be blessed.

Government help or not, just ask anyone who's tried it.

GUEST OPINION:



The abundance of our hearts

*By Randy Rich, pastor
Prentiss Church, Prentiss*

thick with accent. Their ethnic heritage was a source of bitterness in "the land of the free and the home of the brave" as well.

They shortened and disguised their cherished family name so that introductions would not cause the anxiety of averted looks. They adopted Southern culture with all its genteel charm and its own cadre of bitterness.

For them, the "N" word had been Nazi. Unfortunately, they adopted a new one from their new neighbors.

Such is the way of bitterness. It is evil's favorite tool.

Bitterness is to the spirit what cancer is to the body. Fear and trembling accompany the mention of cancer, but we couch bitterness in our hearts with such ease. The cycle of bitterness is an eternal threat only God can break.

I am thankful that the American court of public opinion is sensitive enough to avoid flying the Swastika. However, I am afraid that removing flags and enshrining concentration camps does not remove the bitterness they represent.

The issue of race relations is more than skin color, more than flags, even more than "red and yellow, black and white." It is an issue of the heart.

The prophet Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it? 'I the Lord search the mind and try the heart, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings'" (Jer. 17:9-10).

If the cycle was broken, and bitterness did not reign in our hearts, the issue of race relations would lose its energy.

Jeremiah also said, "... this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31:33).

Our hearts cannot house both the covenant of God and the deceitful corruption of bitterness. The Apostle Paul said, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

Most importantly, Jesus said, "...how can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matt. 12:34-37).

What will come out of the abundance of the hearts of Mississippi Baptists?

Editor's note: February 11 is Racial Reconciliation Sunday across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Thomas V. Brisco: real-life Indiana Jones

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — He doesn't swing on vines through winding caves, dodge massive boulders, or narrowly escape pits of poisonous vipers.

He isn't hunting for the lost Ark of the Covenant while being pursued by thieves and evil governments, like Indiana Jones, the hero of the Raiders of the Lost Ark series of films. He doesn't carry a bullwhip or pistol in his quest for ancient artifacts.

However, Thomas V. Brisco does share something with Indiana Jones — a passion for archaeology. Although his real life archaeological adventures are not full of the heart-pounding excitement of an Indiana Jones movie, that's OK with him because he believes biblical archaeology should be heart-changing, not heart-pounding.

Whether he's showing slides of fertile crescent topography, discussing Egyptian rule during the Late Bronze Age, or leading unofficial tours of the British Museum's archaeological exhibits,

Brisco uses what he and other archaeologists have dug up to open up the world of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus, and Paul to people today.

Brisco is professor of biblical backgrounds and archaeology and associate dean for special master's degrees at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. His "Holman Bible Atlas" won a Gold Medallion Award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association last year.

He has four years of experience as area director of an archaeological dig of Timnah, an ancient city associated with the story of Samson. His travels

inal context so that modern people might better hear Scripture as it was first heard.

Brisco became a Christian at age 9 at Reading Avenue Church in Texarkana, Texas. Captain of his school basketball team and catcher for the baseball team, he sensed he was missing something and became more involved in church around age 15. Confessing a love for rocks, fossils, and minerals since boyhood, he still believed he would become a geologist.

At Beech Street Church in Texarkana, Brisco sensed God's call. After consulting the church he believed the call was to preach. By 17, he was licensed and preaching in missions and retirement homes. By 18, he served as associate pastor and youth director. At Ouachita Baptist University (OBU), he served First Church-Ashdown as youth director, associate pastor, and then interim pastor.

He never considered any seminary other than Southwestern because of the school's reputation as well as the recommendation of OBU professors who were alumni. Not knowing exactly where the campus was located, he headed west.

His affinity for maps had not yet developed, however. "I didn't bother looking at one — I just thought the seminary was on I-20 or 30," he said. "When I got near Weatherford, Texas (about 20 miles too far west), I realized I was wrong."

Once Brisco found Southwestern, he never left again except for a brief teaching stint at Ouachita.

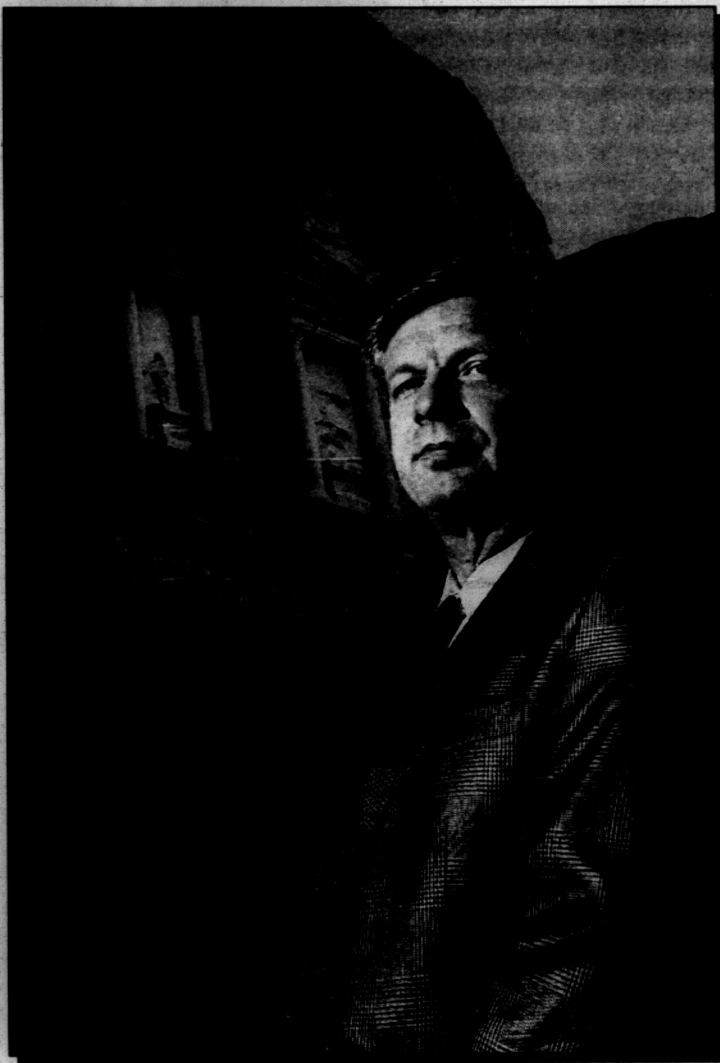
"Southwestern has been part

of my life since 1969," he said. "It has become my home in a very meaningful sense."

After earning his master of divinity in 1973, he earned the seminary's first Ph.D. in biblical backgrounds and archaeology and received the seminary's David Meir International Study League Award for proficiency in archaeology and biblical studies.

Brisco is thankful for Southwestern's commitment to archaeological studies when many theological institutions are letting archaeological studies fall by the wayside.

Though the popularity of archaeological studies waned during the 1970s, Brisco remains convinced such studies are vital to understanding Scripture.



Brisco

have taken him all over the ancient Near East, including Israel, Egypt, the Sinai, Lebanon, Turkey, and Greece. And he has traced the apostle Paul's footsteps through Rome, other parts of Italy, and Malta.

Most days at Southwestern his khakis and ties do not distinguish him from colleagues. But talk with him, attend a lecture or read his work, and his driving passion emerges — use archaeology to recover the Bible's orig-

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"Archaeology is a tool that biblical studies can't do without," Brisco said.

Archaeology has helped recover ancient manuscripts and other raw data useful for reconstructing the past.

This material sheds light on biblical peoples like the Hittites, whose culture, language, and cities were only recently discovered.

Archaeology brings the Bible to life and casts "light upon the biblical world that we might understand the Bible in context," Brisco said.

Such illumination is hard work. Archaeologists might work years on a site in a group of 5-by-5-meter plots, their every move and find meticulously recorded, knowing that when they leave enough remains uncovered to keep another team busy for years.

The heroic, exciting archaeology of cinema is nothing like the reality of backbreaking work to uncover a drinking cup dating from Samson's time.

Looking back

10 years ago

"General Manuel Noriega surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ and confessed him as Lord and Savior on May 15, 1990," says Frank Pollard, during a sermon at First Church, Jackson. He was relaying reports from a warden and chaplain at the Miami institution where Noriega is imprisoned.

20 years ago

Boosted in part by a \$1.3 million "13th" check from the Baptist General Convention of Texas, national receipts for Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program in January are more than two million dollars greater than any single month in the history of the program.

50 years ago

Would-be safecrackers make an unsuccessful attempt to rob the vaults in the Baptist Building on Sunday night, February 4. The thieves apparently entered the building through a window in the office of the editor of The Baptist Record.

LifeWay Best Sellers

HARDBACK

1. Prayer of Jabez, Bruce Wilkinson (Multnomah)
2. He Chose the Nails, Max Lucado (Nelson)
3. Night Light, James Dobson (Multnomah)
4. My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers (Barbour)
5. Praying God's Word, Beth Moore (B&H)
6. Grace for the Moment, Max Lucado (Countryman)
7. Breaking Free, Beth Moore (B&H)
8. Experiencing God Day by Day? Dev & Journal, Henry Blackaby (B&H)
9. Just Give Me Jesus, Anne Graham Lotz (Word)
10. 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day, John Maxwell (Nelson)

PAPERBACK

1. Power of a Praying Wife, Stormie Omartian (Harvest)
2. Power of a Praying Parent, Stormie Omartian (Harvest)
3. Jesus Freaks, DC Talk (Albury)
4. Boy Meets Girl, Josh Harris (Multnomah)
5. Bad Girls of the Bible, Liz Curtis Higgs (Waterbrook)
6. Case for Faith, Lee Strobel (Zondervan)
7. Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman (Moody)
8. Experiencing God, Henry Blackaby (B&H)
9. Really Bad Girls of the Bible, Liz Curtis Higgs (Waterbrook)
10. Sacred Romance, John Eldredge (Nelson)

'Amazing Grace' big part of doctrine study

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The hymn Amazing Grace has often been referred to as "the Baptist national anthem." The doctrine of God's grace is a significant part of Baptist theology.

In that spirit, the 2001 Baptist Doctrine Study is titled Amazing Grace: God's Initiative — Our Response.

The Discipleship and Family Ministry (DFM) Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) sponsored previews of this year's doctrine study in three locations: Calvary Church, Tupelo, on Jan. 29; First Church, Clinton, on Jan. 30; and First Church, Biloxi, on Feb. 1.

Jim Futral, MBCB executive director-treasurer, was conference leader in all three locations.

According to DFM consultant Don Hicks, the participation in this year's previews was extraordinary. "I couldn't have been more pleased with the response," he said.

The six-chapter student's book was written by Timothy George, founding dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham.

The book and study explore the concepts of God's sovereignty, the fall of man, human depravity, God's elective pur-

pose, and human free will.

"This can be a controversial study," said Hicks, "but we feel that the book gives a good balance between different viewpoints."

Futral developed his own study guide to go along with the book study, and copies of the guide were distributed at the conference sites.

"We're totally dependent on grace," Futral said. "All grace is initiated by God, and it's available to all who will accept it."

Futral strove to make the study practical and accessible to conferees, even leading the group in singing Amazing Grace at the opening and closing of each session.

He suggested that pastors might use the study as a sermon series on Sunday nights, or as study material to be used on successive prayer meeting nights. Futral used Power Point software extensively to illustrate his points, which followed a traditional Baptist understanding.

The conference was designed primarily for

those who would be leading the study in their local churches.

"Several people I spoke to were excited about offering this study in their churches," Hicks said.

"We need to make our people aware of the importance of grace. We're totally dependent on it."

"I'd hope that by using this study we'd all be better equipped to share with others

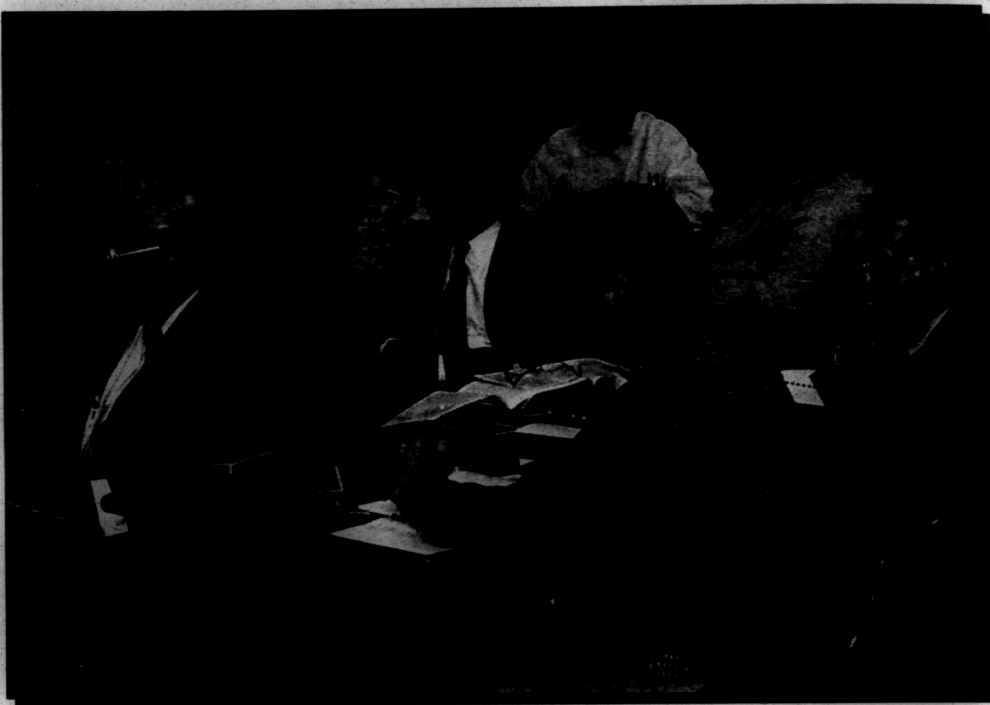
about grace," he pointed out.

A video crew taped several segments of the Clinton conference for inclusion in Vessels, the MBCB video news magazine.

For more information concerning the doctrine study, contact Don Hicks at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3283 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail dhicks@mbcb.org.

Clarification

Persons interested in attending the Dave Ramsey seminar at First Church, Jackson, on February 23-24, and who are not members of First Church, should contact the Ramsey organization directly at (888) 227-3223 for registration information. The telephone number published in the February 1 issue is for church member registration only.



ENJOYING A LIGHTER MOMENT — Conferees at the 2001 Baptist Doctrine Study at First Church, Clinton, enjoy a lighter moment provided by Jim Futral, conference leader. The conference in Clinton was one of three previews of this year's doctrine study offered in Tupelo and Biloxi. (Photo by Tony Martin)

'Impact Northeast' partners with conventions

DALLAS (ABP) — Tall buildings glisten like jewels along the coastline, while lush hills and mountains stretch inland for hundreds of miles. It is the northeastern por-

tion of the United States, and it is home to millions of unchurched people and relatively few Baptists.

Baptists in the South have cast their eyes in that direction by entering a multi-state partnership that is seeking to bring more spiritual light into the region.

"Impact Northeast" has united six "support conventions" in the South — Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia — with five "impact conventions" in the Northeast — the District of Columbia, Maryland/Delaware, New England, New York, and Pennsylvania/South Jersey. Together, they are making a concerted effort to expand the Baptist witness in the Northeast.

"The Northeast U.S.A. is so critical for the evangelization of America because easily over one quarter of our population lives there and vast portions of those people don't know Christ," said Don Sewell, director of Texas Partnerships for the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Dallas.

Only 1% of the population in the Northeast is Baptist, said Charles Barnes, coordinator of Impact Northeast in Annapolis, Md. "We still have not impacted the tremendous population centers of America," said Barnes, who recently retired as executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

Barnes was talking, of course, about New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Washington, and the many other cities of the region.

Those cities and the countryside that surrounds them make up "the most unchurched 25% of the American population" said Steve Seaberry, equipping coordinator for Texas Partnerships.

Individual state conventions in the South and Northeast have formed partnerships in

the past, Sewell said. They provided the "seedbeds" of concern that led to Impact Northeast, "the brainchild" of four state executives: Bill Pinson of Texas, Reggie McDonough of Virginia, Bill Causey of Mississippi, and Ken Lyle of New England. [Pinson, Causey, and Lyle have since retired.]

The 11-convention partnership started in 2000 but has been slow to gather steam. It lasts through 2007.

Impact Northeast is a "very expansive and ambitious partnership," Sewell said. "This partnership is a new paradigm. Formerly a partnership simply was between two Baptist conventions or unions. Impact Northeast draws from the very best resources of all these conventions to address church growth and leadership needs in any of those five impact conventions."

"While it's true," Seaberry said, "that the six southern conventions have more just in raw numbers, ... that's not to imply there's a void in the Northeast conventions. We're looking at this as an equal partnership drawing on the joint resources."

"I personally think that we as Texas Baptists have no excuse but to exhibit a compassion to our countrymen at this juncture in American history," Sewell said. "We are indebted as Texas Baptists to the Christian heritage which we historically derived from the Northeast part of the U.S.A. in the 1700's."

"They shared the time-honored truths of freedom of religion and soul competency which are the bedrock of our faith," he said.

For more information, contact Ken Rhodes, director of the Partnership Missions Office of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3398 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. Email krhodes@mbcb.org.

Musgrove hosts prayer luncheon



Governor Ronnie Musgrove, a Mississippi Baptist, hosted the Governor's Prayer Luncheon February 1 at the Clarion Hotel and Convention Center, Jackson. The event was sponsored by Mission Mississippi as part of the first annual Statewide Conference on Christian Unity. Keynote speaker for the luncheon was Tony Evans, senior pastor of the Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas. (Photo by Tony Martin)

More and more churches realize the importance of the signs they have displayed in front of or around their church facilities. For a long time most churches have just assumed that everybody knows who they are, where they are, and where the people ought to go when they get there. But, that is not true and we are discovering that signs do help.

I am fascinated, amused, and sometimes baffled by the signs I see around churches. Let me share some of the "good," "not-so-good," and "I'm not quite sure about," signs that I have seen around the houses of worship.

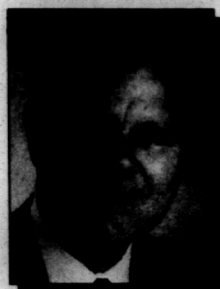
"Guest Parking." More and more I see churches with this sign somewhere near a main entrance of the church. It is a thoughtful thing to have special parking for visitors and guests so that they will not have to walk a half-mile across the parking lot, and also the guests can generally assume that those parking places are near the main entrance.

While everyone who attends church ought to be welcomed and provided for, it does seem proper that we would go out of our way to accommodate those who come to visit us. Whatever we can do to lower the threshold of their awkwardness will help make the Good News they are about to hear, and the fellowship they are about to enjoy, more appealing.

"Caution — God at Work at Bethel Baptist Church." This sign appears on the highway as you approach a church here in our state. Isn't that great! Seeing that sign slowed me down, lifted me up, and sent me on my way thinking about what the Lord is doing in, through, and with the people at Bethel.

My prayer is that whether we put a sign out on the highway or not, at all of our churches, you could find God at work!

"Warning — Anyone parked on these premises without permission will be prosecuted." I saw this sign on the parking lot of a church, and it left me wondering what was going on there.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

I could only imagine a visitor coming to that church, seeing the sign as they are starting to get out of their car, and wondering where they would get permission to park and if they didn't get permission, would their car be towed off? Or worse, would they end up in jail overnight for having parked on this church parking lot?

Now, I'm fairly confident that the problem was related to week-day activities around the church where businesses, students, or others filled up the parking lot leaving no spaces for those attending church activities. Still, it just seems rather uninviting and odd to see such a sign on a church parking lot.

"You are now entering the mission field." This sign has become more and more popular with churches and states a dramatic and wonderful truth as you leave the church grounds. It is a wonderful reminder, as you leave the worship place and head toward home, school, business, or activities, that God has put us out there on the mission field.

Finally, there are two signs that I have observed in the last few months that caused me to pause and wonder, but I'm not quite sure what they mean.

"Warning — Mud on road." This sign was right near a church, but I don't think it had anything to do with the church. Still, I don't think I've ever seen a sign like that and since it was adjacent to a church, I just wondered if it had something to do with the church. It did make me pay extra attention. I did make it through that section of the road okay, all the while giving some thought about what possible connections it could have with a house of worship.

"Slow — Church." This last sign I observed just before getting to a church. My first thought was, "What does that mean?" A number of other thoughts came to my mind. Of course, I knew it probably meant to slow down because there is a church just ahead — a church that is active and involved, people coming and going, cars pulling in and out, and areas congested — you need to be alert!

Another thought that came to my mind was it could mean a church that was slow, and I wondered why anyone would want to advertise that they had a slow church! Here we are in the 21st century, with life moving at such a rapid pace that it's hard to even keep up with a thought process, and the church certainly does not need to be left out, sitting on the side of the road, waving at the world as it races ahead to nowhere.

In Jesus Christ, we have the way, the truth, and the life. Wherever there are people and needs, darkness and unbelief, the church not only has a need to be there but the right to be there, sharing the wonderful, living hope we have in Jesus Christ. Not only do we need to be where the action is — the church should be the action!

As I reflected on that sign, **"Slow — Church,"** I thought how some might interpret it as meaning, "Slow down and come to church. Put your brakes on. Stop and meet with God." It was God who gave us the Word in Scripture, "Be still and know that I am God." That is a glorious thought and one which this world, moving too fast, needs to hear.

People need to know that there is a quiet place, a refreshing and renewing place, where we can meet with God. God was not encouraging laziness or lethargy, but he was stating the fact of our existence — that oftentimes we are moving at such a pace, neither our eyes nor our hearts can adjust to the things passing by so quickly — so we need to slow down.

With all that you have just ahead of you, prepare even now to put the brakes on, slow down, and be at church to meet with God this coming Lord's day.

W.Va. exec Phillips joins Mid-America

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — Jere L. Phillips, executive director/minister of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists, will join the faculty of Mid-America Seminary Feb. 1.

At the Memphis, Tenn., seminary, Phillips will be associate professor of practical theology and director of the practical missions office and denominational relations office.

Phillips, 49, has led the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists since June 1995 and was director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's missions department from 1990-95.

Suspicious envelope at LifeWay generates scare

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A suspicious envelope delivered to the human resources department at LifeWay Christian Resources tested negative for any biological hazards, according to the Nashville Public Health Department.

Delivery and discovery of the envelope led to a brief quarantine of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agency on Jan. 25.

The envelope, containing an

unknown substance along with a note reading, "Have a good day," was delivered by the U.S. Postal Service to the LifeWay complex on Jan. 24. It was opened in the human resources department mid-morning on the 25th.

Following routine procedures for handling of suspicious mail, LifeWay contacted Metropolitan Nashville Police, which resulted in the arrival of emergency personnel, including the Nashville Health Department and the local

fire department.

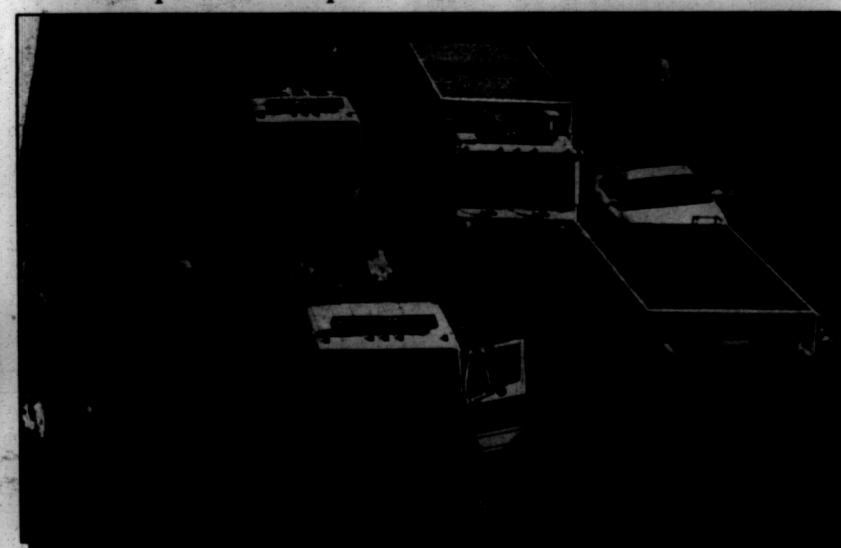
No one was allowed to enter or leave the LifeWay complex from approximately 10:45 a.m. until noon.

The person who opened the envelope was required to undergo a decontamination process. Other employees in the immediate area were held in quarantine until the health department released them at approximately 12:30 p.m.

"We are grateful that the substance tested negative and the employees in our human resources department are all OK," LifeWay President James T. Draper Jr. said. "We appreciate the immediate response of the metro police and fire

departments and of the health department. While we regret that this incident took place, we are glad that we had procedures in place for handling of suspicious mail. Those procedures were carefully followed."

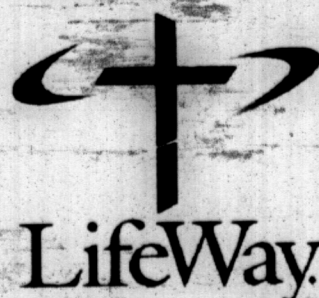
The SBC Building in Nashville, across the street from LifeWay, was the focus of a similar emergency response in March 1999 involving a letter inside an opened envelope.



BRIEF QUARANTINE — Metropolitan Nashville emergency personnel arrived at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention on Jan. 25 after they were alerted by LifeWay officials of a suspicious envelope. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

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1-800-654-1294

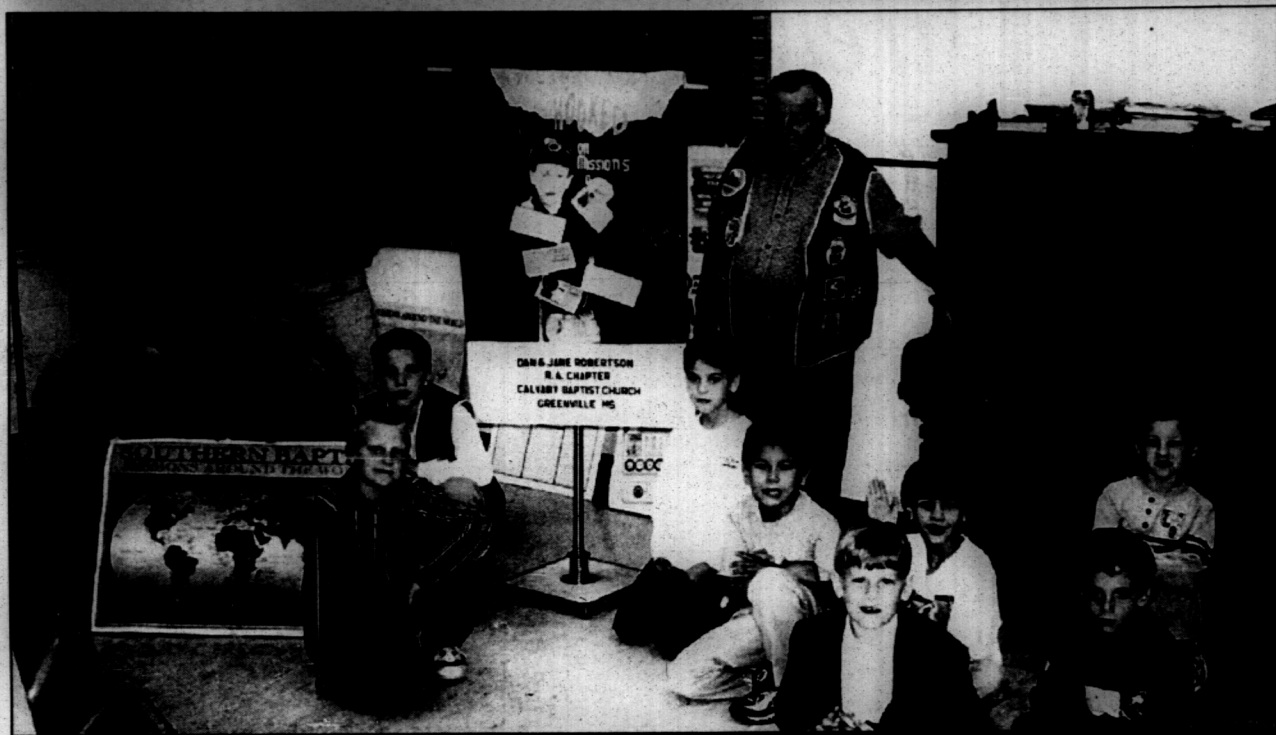
Media library workshop set for Feb. 17

Copiah and Lincoln Associations will hold a workshop for church media librarians on February 17 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Best Inns and Suites on Broadway Boulevard in Brookhaven, according to Lincoln Association media librarian Agatha Sandidge.

Peggy Tacon, media library director at Dauphin Way Church, Mobile, Ala., will teach The Church Media Library Ministry. Attendees are encouraged to bring the book, The Church Media Library Ministry, by Dennis Conniff.

The workshop is free, and lunch will be provided at a cost of \$5 per person in advance or at the door.

Reservations should be mailed to Lincoln Association, Attention: Media Library, P.O. Box 363, Brookhaven, MS 39601-0363. For more information, contact Deborah Quinly at (601) 894-4001, or Sandidge at (601) 833-8111.



Dan and Jane Robertson RA Chapter of Calvary Church, Greenville

Dan and Jane Robertson RA Chapter of Calvary Church, Greenville, celebrated RA week in their church by presenting a skit on missions, reading Scripture, leading in prayer, passing out church bulletins, and taking up offering. The RAs also had a supper for world hunger, collected cans to help send suits to pastors in new work areas, and offering for the Children's Village and disaster relief. James Kerr is RA director at Calvary Church and Washington Association. Chuck Chesteen is the RA counselor.

Escatawpa Church, Escatawpa, will host its annual steak dinner for Volunteer Missions 2001 on Feb. 17, 5-7:30 p.m., in fellowship hall. The theme for the evening is "Share His Love." All profits go toward mission trips to Brazil and Ukraine scheduled for the end of May. "Twenty-eight people from the church are a part of this year's foreign mission teams," said Jim McEachern, minister of music and youth. Greg Johnston is pastor. Contact the church office at (228) 475-2938 to order tickets and for more information.

Good Hope Church, Purvis, held a special service for the dedication of its new educational building with 5,000 square feet for classroom space. Pictured is the building committee and John E. Watts, pastor; (from left) Floyd Purvis; Steve Fowler; Scott Lee; Wendell Hudson, chairman; Watts; Donnie Phillips; and Jimmy Cooper.

First Church, Jackson, will host Beginning Again Workshop each Thursday from March 1-April 19, 2001 at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall West. Registration will be 6:30 p.m. on March 1. Early registration fee is \$25. For more information call (601) 949-1906.

Gold City will be in concert at Zion Hill Church, Wesson, on Feb. 15 at 7 p.m. For ticket information call the church at (601) 643-5145.

Teen Girls Conference will be presented at Shady Grove Church, Batesville, on Feb. 24. The conference is open to all girls in grades 7-12 and is free of charge. Registration will begin at 12:30 p.m. and attendees will be dismissed at 6:30 p.m. Terry Tribble is pastor of Shady Grove Church. For additional information call (662) 578-7288.

Pleasant Valley Church, Eddiceton, will host a missions conference Feb. 11-14. Ronnie Robinson, executive director, The Baptist Children's Village will speak Sunday morning. Katie Reid, associational WMU director, will speak Sunday evening.

LMCO GOALS REACHED

GAs of Providence Church, Hattiesburg, were instrumental in helping meet the church's

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$20,000. Their project raised over \$400. The goal was met on victory day, Dec. 17. Total offering received was over \$23,000. Pictured are GAs and their leaders, Cindi Townsend and daughter Traci, and Paula Clark. Ray Cummings is pastor.

Liberty Church, Carroll Association, set a goal of \$2,500 for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, and received \$2,965. Riley Ainsworth is pastor.



GAs of Providence Church, Hattiesburg



Dedication services at Good Hope Church, Purvis

**WHY PAY MORE FOR
MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT
INSURANCE???**

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1-601-924-1982

ALL SIZES
SALES AND RENTALS

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

February 8, 2001

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

2001 State Senior Adult Retreats at Gulfshore

"The Spiritual Transformational Senior"

May 14-16 Senior Adult I (cost: \$89)



The Richardson Family

Preachers: Jay Richardson, Greenville
Gary Richardson, West Point
James Richardson, Madison
Music: Ian Richardson and
the Senior Adult Choir, FBC, Cleveland

May 17-19 Senior Adult II (cost: \$89)

Phil Walker

Preacher: Phil Walker, Ridgecrest, Madison
Music: Ed Sudduth and choir, FBC, McComb

May 21-25 Senior Adult III (cost: \$160)

Dean Register

Preacher: Dean Register, Temple BC, Hattiesburg
Music: Ken Hopkins and the Senior Adult Choir, Temple BC, Hattiesburg

Conferences include: Reaching Seniors through Sunday School,
My Identity in Christ, Free to Forgive, and Happy Side of Life (humor).
\$40 deposit per person after March 1, 2001
Contact Gulfshore Baptist Assembly 228-452-7261

2001 State Singles Retreat at Gulfshore

"The Power of a
Transformational Single"



Alan Correy

May 26-28

Renee Schidt



- Men's Conferences with Alan Correy
- Women's Conferences with Renee Schidt
- Hawaiian Luau with steel drum band, Holmes Community College
- Celebration Services • Conferences • Seafood Banquet
- "Walking Faithfully" with Gwen Williams, *Miss Chocolate*
- Forgiveness • Finances • My Identity In Christ

- T-Shirt for early registration (\$40 deposit by May 1)
 - Sunday options include Jazzland (\$20 by May 1), New Orleans, Seamen's Ministry, Swamp Tour
 - Sunday Night Concert featuring *The Naturals* from Mississippi College
- Call the Discipleship and Family Ministry Dept. for info: 601-968-3800

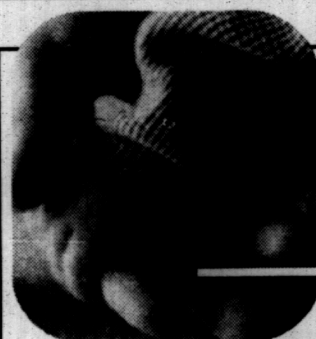
YOUTH MINISTRY FORUM

Featured Speaker: Allen Jackson

Youth Ministry Professor, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

FOR: Part-Time Youth Ministers &
Volunteer Youth Ministers
WHEN: February 16 & 17, 2001
6:45 pm Friday through noon Saturday
WHERE: Mississippi College Student Center
Clinton, Miss.
COST: Free
Sponsored by Youth Ministry Team
of the Mississippi Baptist Convention

TO REGISTER: Contact Mark Lott at 1-800-748-1651
or E-mail at mlott@mbcb.org.
Pre-registration is necessary!



CHILDREN

our Past, Present and Future

Mississippi Baptist
2001 Christian Education Clinic
(formerly Church Weekday Education Clinic)

Locations

Highland BC, Meridian	FBC, Jackson
February 17, 2001	March 17, 2001

Cost: Registration fee \$16 (advance registration required)

Schedule: 7:30 a.m. - Registration
10-10:30 a.m. - Brunch
12:30 p.m. - Dismissed

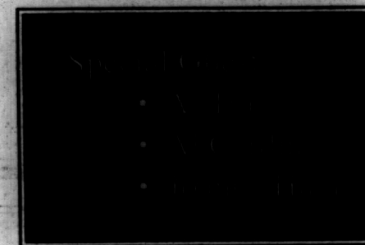
Mississippi Baptist Discipleship & Family Ministry Department
1-800-478-1651 or 968-3800 or e-mail dhicks@mbcb.org.



The Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the
MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CHURCH MUSIC CONFERENCE

February 15-16, 2001

First Baptist Church, Vicksburg





FEBRUARY 13, 2001
9 A.M. - NOON

LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH
5199 LAKELAND DRIVE, FLOWOOD
VBS JUMPSTART

C o n t a c t
9 6 3



Older Children's Retreat

July 19-21, 2001
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

Centri-Kid is a recreation-based camp that provides fun for each camper while at the same time teaches Christ through each event, Bible study and at worship.

Cost: \$120 **Key Elements**

- First 400 Mississippi adults and campers to register will each receive a \$20 credit
- Registration begins March 1 for Mississippi churches
- Small group Bible study
- Exciting age-appropriate worship
- Large variety of track time
- Camp-wide fellowships
- Big-time recreation

Note: Older Children's Retreat is for children who have completed grades 3-6 at the end of the 2000-2001 school year.

Special policy requires churches to send adult counselors (21 or older) with groups of young people under 18 years old. A counselor of the same sex is required for each seven girls or each seven boys (or portions thereof).

• For program information contact Linda Reeves, Sunday School Department, (601)292-3294 or 1-800-748-1651

2001 MUSIC LEADERSHIP - JULY 12-14



Preschool: Derry Billingsley, First Baptist Church, Edgefield, S.C.



Younger Children: Marcia Card, Vineville Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.



Older Children: Virginia Dickert, Music Specialist, Jacksonville, Fla.

Register through: Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571, (228) 452-7261

Preschool/Children Leadership Clinic

Alta Woods Baptist Church, Jackson, August 17-18

\$5 per person
No pre-registration required

6-9:30 p.m., Friday
8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Saturday



Preschool: John Paul Moccia
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Younger Children: Don Odom
Florida Baptist Theological College
Graceville, Fla.



Older Children: Martha Kirkland -
LifeWay Christian Resources
Nashville, Tenn.



Grades 1-6
Donna Goodman
Lakeside BC
Rogers, Ark.



Children's Choir Coordinators
Mary Ann Tyler
FBC Roswell, Ga.

2001 Young Musicians' Camps

(for children who have finished the 4th, 5th or 6th grades by June 1)

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

June 26-30

Cost: \$136.50

Register through Gulfshore Baptist Assembly



Eileen Straw - Director
Roswell United Methodist Church
Atlanta, Ga.

Blue Mountain College

July 23-27

Cost: \$100

Register through the Church Music Department



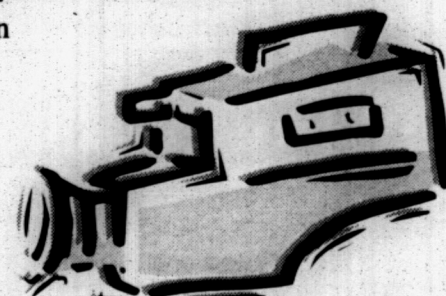
Jim Gill - Director
Church Music and Worship
Department Director
South Carolina Baptist Convention
Columbia, S.C.

For more information on any of these camps, call the Church Music Dept., 1-800-748-1651

WITNESSING THROUGH MEDIA AWARDS

Sponsored by the Mississippi Baptists in Broadcasting organization, the 2001 **Witnessing Through Media Awards** program has been created to recognize radio and video productions which demonstrate excellence in message design and production in helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

If your church is involved in a radio or video production in the following time frame (March 1, 2000 - March 1, 2001), why not think of entering this year's awards program. "We have had some outstanding creative work done by Mississippi churches in the past and I know this year will be no exception," says Farrell Blankenship, director, Department of Broadcast Services. Contact his office for an entry form or additional information.
Entry deadline is March 16, 2001.



T R U E L O V E W A I T S



True Love Waits is an international campaign that challenges teenagers and college students to remain sexually abstinent until marriage. To date, over a million young people have signed covenant cards stating: "Believing that true love waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, my future mate and my future children, to be sexually abstinent from this day until I enter a biblical marriage relationship."

On February 14, 2001, thousands of students will be sign-

ing and mailing commitment cards on the Internet. They will "Seize the Net" (the Internet) to take a stand for sexual abstinence until marriage. That day will culminate several weeks and months of focus on True Love Waits. If you would like more information on True Love Waits and to implement this strategy in your church, please the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at 1-800-748-1651 or by E-mail at hgellis@mbcb.org. You can also get more information at www.truelovewaits.com.

Mississippi
Bible Drill
Camp



OLDER CHILDREN'S Bible Drill Camp

July 5-7, 2001

who have completed 2nd grade

July 5-7 (cycle 3)

Central Hills Baptist Retreat

Kosciusko, Miss.

Cost: \$80



Schedule: Thursday 1:30 p.m. - Registration
Saturday noon - Goodbye

Purpose:

For church groups (with sponsors), whether or not their church has Bible Drill, to participate in personal Bible study, Scripture memorization, Bible skills, worship, time with missionaries, spiritual growth, swimming, horseback riding, rifle range and canoeing.

Special policy requires churches to send adult counselors (21 years or older) with groups of young people under 18 years of age. If the group includes both boys and girls, a counselor of the same sex is required for each seven girls (or portion thereof) and for each seven boys (or portion thereof). Counselors will be responsible for the conduct of the children they bring and will participate with them throughout camp.

For more information, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.

Mississippi Acteens Convention

Live to Testify

First Baptist Church, Clinton (Friday & Saturday)
Camp Garaywa (Sunday)

March 2-4

Cost: \$22 per person

(includes T-shirts, lunch and program fees)

Registration deadline is February 16

Schedule

FRIDAY:

6:00 - 7:15 p.m. Registration

7:30 - 9:30 Opening Celebration

SATURDAY:

9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Morning Celebration

10:15 - 12:45 p.m. Conferences

12:45 - 4:00 p.m. Lunch & Ministry Project

7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Evening Conferences

SUNDAY:

8:00 a.m.

8:30 - 10:15 a.m.

10:30 - 12:30 p.m.

Breakfast

Conferences

Closing

Celebration

For more information, call the state WMU office
at 601-292-3316 or 1-800-748-1651

Keyboard Workshop 2001



for
Church Organists
Church Pianists
Ministers of Music

Music Specialists: Lew King and
Darwin Brooks

March 16

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Baptist Building, Jackson

PURPOSE:

To provide skill development and
knowledge of electronic keyboards for
those who serve as worship leaders.

For more information, contact the Church Music Department
at 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

"I BELIEVE"

GA Mother/Daughter Overnight

March 9-10

Camp Garaywa

\$33 per person

(includes meals, lodging, insurance, and program fees)

GA Mother/Daughter Overnight
Registration Deadline: February 23

Parent's Name _____

Daughter's Name/Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ (H) _____ (W)

Church Name _____ Association _____

Emergency Contact: Name _____ Phone _____

Number Attending _____ x \$33 = \$ _____ (total enclosed)

Please remember these WMU procedures:

• Please mail in your registration form with payment.

Reservations may not be made by phone.

• Groups wishing to bunk together must register together.

Whenever possible, please send one check for the entire group.

Make checks payable to MBCB and send to

Mother/Daughter Overnight, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

Pray this day for...

February 9-22, 2001

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

Paul's Faith Prayer

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."
Ephesians 3:16-17

For (1) Race Reconciliation Sunday (CAC) (2) Chief Executive General Pervez Musharrah of Pakistan, (3) Pray for a youth director in Corona, N.Y. The high rise apartment where the church is located has 7,000 children under 18.

Civil war began in Nimba County, Liberia, 11 years ago. Missionaries had to leave the area, but the Lord continued to multiply His Kingdom. Pray that the Lord will encourage and protect Christians who continue to work there.

For (1) WMU Focus Week (WMU Emphasis) (2) Pray for safety and security for a missionary wife and child as they remain at home, ministering in an isolated place in the bush of Eastern Africa. The husband is away on missionary work.

Bill Howse III in Brentwood, Tenn, is a SBC criminal justice ministries director. Pray that individuals from churches and associations would be involved in "Operation Starting Line" whose goal is to share the gospel with every inmate in the country by 2005.

For (1) Vacation Bible School JumpStart (SS) (2) Pastor & Staff Counseling Conference (CAPM)

Amity Press, near Nanking, recently celebrated the publication of 25 million Bibles in China since Christmas of 1987. This represents one Bible for every 52 people of 1.3 billion people, one-fifth of the world's people. Pray that all will have access to a Bible.

A member of the Colombia Deaf Team writes that the deaf are very responsive to the gospel at this time. There is a public school open to the gospel wanting someone to work with their students. Pray that God will call someone to this work.

Missionary Dennis Brotherton, strategy leader for South Korea, asks you to pray that God will lead someone to respond to the call to take the gospel to the island of Cheju. Pray that many of the blue-collar workers living on Cheju will have the opportunity to hear about Christ.

For (1) Church Music Conference (CM) (2) Pray today for Prime Minister Mugur Isarescu of Romania (eastern Europe).

For (1) Barna 2000-2001 Seminar (Ch Min) (2) Pray the approval for Baptists to begin the Lord's work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (3) Pray that Chakma (Chau-mah) believers, of Bangladesh, will be burdened to share Christ.

Pray for the 1,739 unreached people groups around the world. Pray that Christian volunteers and church groups will minister to the needs of residents of care facilities and be a blessing to the staff.

Currently there is no Baptist witness in Cartanal, Venezuela (300,000 population) except for a weekly family Bible study led by the pastor of the nearest Baptist church. Pray that God will begin a church-planting movement here.

For (1) Churchmen Retreat/ Rehearsal (CM) (2) Youth Ministry Forum, D&FM (3) Ethnically mixed people live in Ghana's major cities, doing manual labor. Pray for faithful Christians who show God's love, mercy and power.

For (1) Christian Education Clinics (D&FM) (2) Women's Forum Network (WMU) (3) Please pray for Acting Premier Mikhail Mikhaylovich Kasyanov of Russia.

What the Women of Mississippi Need...

ONLY JESUS!

Begin your 2001 calendar planning with the women of your church in prayer. Help women prayerfully develop their Christian lifestyle to include: Ongoing spiritual enrichment through personal Bible study, hands-on missions involvement, and the practice of verbally sharing their faith.

Mark your calendars for these state events:

Women REACHING Women

Central Hills
March 9-10

LifeWay Regional Women's Forum

Camp Garaywa
April 26-27

LifeWay Encounter Event

Mary Kassian
FBC, Clinton
April 27-28

ONLY JESUS—BEYOND BELIEF

Women's Retreat
Gulfshore
August 24-25

Call and/or E-mail your state WMU department for more information:
601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

Church Facilities Workshop

March 15, 2001
8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Country Woods Baptist Church
6737 Siwell Road
Jackson, Mississippi
371-7955

The conference is for pastors, staff members, building committees, long-range planning committees, business administrators and maintenance/property personnel.

Please complete the registration form below and mail,
E-mail or fax to:
Keith Gordon, Church Building Services
P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205
Fax number: 601-714-7426, E-mail: kgordon@mbcb.org

Church Facilities Workshop
March 15, 2001
Registration Form
Cost: \$10 per person (includes lunch)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Church/Vendor: _____
Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

HOUSE TOPS.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Lee, Williams, and Hoffman

National Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) honored out-going Mississippi WMU president Rebecca Williams of Gautier during the organization's January board meeting in Talladega, Ala. Williams has served on the board since 1997 and was a member of the board's finance (1997-98), consultation (1998), and executive director search committees (1999) during her term of service. Pictured with Williams are national WMU executive director Wanda S. Lee (left) and president Janet Hoffman (right). (WMU photo by Teresa Dickens)

John Martin served Wayside Church, Yalobusha Association, for 45 years as treasurer. During that time he worked with three building programs that included the first pastor's home in 1956, a new church in 1969, and a new pastor's home in 1979. His wife Marie served as church clerk for 40 years.

Friendship Church, Grenada, licensed and ordained Trent Jaudon to the ministry on Jan. 14. Jaudon, left, is presented the certificate of license and certificate of ordination by the chairman of deacons, Chip Graham. Jaudon is the associate pastor/youth minister at Friendship Church. Jaudon's father-in-law, Junior Davis, pastor of Friendship Church, Sturgis, preached the ordination sermon. Jaudon hopes to attend seminary in the future and possibly serve one day as a pastor. Bob Self, former pastor of First Church, Brookhaven, is serving as interim pastor.

Len Price was licensed to the ministry at Fellowship Church, Chickasaw County, on Dec. 10.



Jaudon and Graham



Price

Summer camp staff interviews held Feb. 14-17

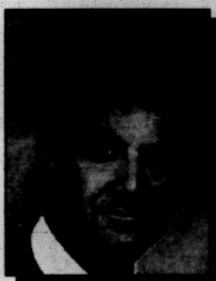
Staff interviews for the 2001 Summer Camping Program at Camp Garaywa are being held February 14-17 at Camp Garaywa. These interviews are being held in conjunction with Summer Missions Interviews. Please contact Robin Keels in the state WMU office at (601) 292-3322 or (800) 748-1651 ext. 322 to request an application and make an appointment for an interview.

STAFF CHANGES

Jerry Guess resigned Zion Church, Pontotoc Association, effective Oct. 3. He is available for a bivocational pastorate,

interim pastorate, or supply. Guess may be contacted at 794 Duncan Road, Caledonia, MS 39740; or phone (662) 356-0220.

Brian Richardson has been called as pastor of Castlewoods Church, Brandon. He has been serving the church as interim pastor since September.



Richardson



Pope Church, Pope, ordained Dale "Ham" Hawkins and Tom Underwood as deacons on Jan. 21. Jimmy C. Bryant is pastor. Pictured (from left) are Bryant, Hawkins, and Underwood.

Keyboard Workshop 2001

for Church Organists, Church Pianists,
and Ministers of Music

March 16 ♦ 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Baptist Building, Jackson

SUBJECT AREAS:

- ♦ Electronic Music in Worship
- ♦ Introduction to Finale
- ♦ Electronic Arranging
- ♦ What is MIDI?
- ♦ Resources on the Web
- ♦ Current Equipment

MUSIC SPECIALISTS WILL BE:

Darwin Brooks
Monument Drive Church,
Tupelo, MS
Lew King,
Wynndale Church,
Terry, MS

Mail registration form to: Keyboard Workshop 2001,
Church Music Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.
If you have questions, call (800) 748-1651 or (601) 292-3272
or fax (601) 714-7422.

REGISTRATION FORM ♦ ELECTRONIC KEYBOARD WORKSHOP 2001

(Enclose a \$20 non-refundable registration fee. Fee includes materials,
noon meal, and break time refreshments.)

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Church _____

Association _____

Sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Church Music Department - L. Graham Smith, director
Dot Pray, keyboard contract consultant

Are you paying too much for your Medical Insurance or Medicare Supplement Coverage? If yes, Call Today!

☐ Major Medical & Surgical Plan

Helps pay benefits for: Hospital Room,
Intensive Care, Surgery, Maternity,
Prescription Drugs.

☐ Medicare Supplement

Ages 65 and over. Low Rates!

☐ Long-term Nursing Care

Also available: Home Health Care

☐ Final Expense Burial Plan

Affordable Senior Life Protection

Agents, GA's and MGA's needed

Not connected with any Government program.

For full details on coverage including
limitations and exclusions call today!

Call today for free information:

**E.F. Hutton Insurance
Marketing**

PO Box 5127, Brandon, MS 39047

or call toll-free:

1-877-232-0686

☐ Medicare Supplement
under age 65
and on disability

Experts join New Orleans Seminary staff

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Experts in leadership, pastoral care, and student ministry have joined the faculty of New Orleans Seminary (NOBS).

Steven Franklin Echols, pastor of First Church, Pleasant Grove, Ala., was elected as associate professor of leadership and director of professional doctoral programs during the trustee executive board's December meeting.

President Chuck Kelley has also announced the appointments of Jeffrey J. Williams, a pastor in Saline, Mich., as assistant professor of pastoral ministry in the College of Undergraduate Studies, and Tate Cockrell, former director of ministries for the Fort Worth-based Dawson McAllister Association, as the seminary's director of student enlistment. All three began service at the seminary Jan. 1.

Echols has served as pastor of churches in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, including his current position where he has led the congregation to several Sunday School growth awards since 1993.

Williams, who serves as senior pastor of Fellowship Church, Saline, Mich., has extensive training in clinical pastoral education, spending more than 20 hours a week each year in direct patient/family care and counseling when serving in the capacities of counseling ministry director and assistant chaplain.

Cockrell, a native of Laurel and graduate of William Carey College and Southwestern Seminary, is anticipated to teach in the area of psychology and counseling.

Mississippians earn Baptist seminary degrees

Southern Seminary celebrated its 186th commencement on Dec. 15. Receiving degrees were Mark Wayne Shaw of Meridian, master of divinity in missions, evangelism, and church growth degree; and Marquette Rogers of Amory, master of divinity degree.

Charles Brian Tillman of Houston received the master of divinity degree from Southeastern Seminary on Dec. 16.

Two students with Mississippi ties received doctoral degrees from New Orleans Seminary during commencement exercises on Dec. 16. Standing with President Charles S. Kelley, Jr.

(center), is Roderick Evan Conerly of Osyka, minister of missions at Istrouma Church, Baton Rouge, La., receiving the Doctor of Philosophy degree (left) and Lawrence Paul Strahan of Poplarville, pastor at First Church, Petal, receiving the Doctor of Ministry degree (right).

Other students receiving degrees were Curtis Alston of Quitman, master of music in church music degree in voice; Alanna Arnett of Picayune, women's ministry certificate; Melanie Partridge Benson of Columbus, master of arts in marriage and family counseling, youth minister at Canaan Church in Columbus; Gary E. Blackwell, master of theology, associate BSU director and lec-

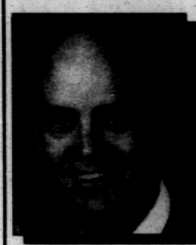
turer in biblical studies at William Carey College in Gulfport; Deena Boyd of Jackson, bachelor of general studies degree with a major in Christian education; Weston J. Burnside Jr., of Meridian, master of divinity degree in pastoral ministry, pastor of Center Grove Church, Meridian; and Michael Glynn Foster of Brookhaven, bachelor of general studies degree in pastoral ministries and Christian education.

Jeffrey Q. Friend of Meridian, associate in pastoral ministries, associate pastor of Greater Calvary Church Missionary Church, Meridian; Deborah Ivy of Clinton, advanced women's ministry certificate, women's ministry coordinator at Morrison Heights Church, Clinton; Joseph Jones of Slidell, La., pastor of Derby Church, Poplarville; Melanie Trevette Lawler of Carthage, master of arts in Christian education in social work; and William Dennis Lollar of Columbus, master of divinity.

Noel "Jay" McElroy of Meridian, church music certi-

cate, minister of music at Mount Horeb Church, Meridian; Jessica Postma McMillan of Theodore, Ala., master of music, youth and children's ministry coordinator of Olive Church, Lumberton; Mary Kathryn Nelson of DeKalb, received the Church Music Certificate degree, children's minister of music of DeKalb Church, DeKalb; and Robert "Bob" Schobert of Biloxi, master of divinity degree with a specialization in Christian Education.

Clay McKenzie Stegall of Pontotoc, master of divinity degree with a specialization in Biblical Languages, college and singles minister of First Church, Clinton; Brian David Stewart of Columbia, bachelor of arts degree in pastoral ministries, pastor of Crystal Springs Church, Tylertown; Robert A. "Bobby" Stults of Laurel, master of divinity; Kevin L. White of Brookhaven, master of divinity degree, pastor of Noxapater Church, Noxapater; and James "Darrell" White of Sontag, associate in pastoral ministries, pastor of Smyrna Church, Hazlehurst.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

How young is too young to begin explaining the "birds and the bees" to a youngster? My eight-year-old is picking up a lot of bad information from her classmates and television.

You can control the television, but the classmates are a little more difficult. When friends and television begin giving inaccurate or immature information, this is when the parent has a great opportunity to be the giver of the "right" information. Answer your child's questions in language they understand. In today's society, sexuality is much more prevalent than when we were growing up. This requires modern parents to be much more well-versed on the subject. If you're not comfortable, get there! A lot of hurt later can be avoided if you will prepare yourself. Visit Lifeway Christian Resources, which has a wonderful set of books for every age of your child — as well as a parent's manual to help you. In Jackson, LifeWay can be reached at (601) 977-9676. In Tupelo, the telephone number is (662) 844-2201.

When our 18-year-old unmarried daughter became pregnant, we agreed to take her and her baby into our home. Now less than a year later, she is pregnant again by the same man. What should we do this time?

Obviously your daughter does not hold to your values, and she sees nothing wrong with having children without the commitment of marriage. You cannot undo what has happened, but you can put a stop to her using your good nature. Let her know that, since she has chosen this lifestyle, at a certain point after the birth of the second child that you will be expecting her to move into her own place and take care of her children (you decide the time frame). You have been rewarding her bad behavior and shielding her from the consequences of her actions. Read the book, *Boundaries*, by Cloud and Townsend. This is an excellent source on how to build boundaries that will assure your daughter of your love but not your approval of her behavior.

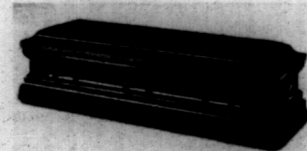
Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. In central Mississippi, Ron Mumbower can be heard from 9-10 a.m. each Wednesday on WHJT-FM 93.5. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



Conerly, Kelley, and Strahan

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VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

Editor:

An increasing number of Southern Baptist churches across the U.S. are focusing directly on the world's unreached peoples.

Many of these churches have "adopted" an unreached people group in particular and are participating in the evangelization of that people through prayer support and short term projects.

I have been excited to be somewhat of a pioneer in the area of non-residential missions in that I live in the Ivory Coast but advocate for an unreached people group (the Banta Themne) in Sierra Leone.

Our team (which consists of four others who live in the United States) has been excited to see churches realize the impact they can have on reaching the unreached.

I am particularly interested in having some of our African American churches in Mississippi participate in this adoption but have not had much response.

This is a great opportunity for smaller churches to catch a vision of what they can do to spread the Gospel to those

areas where the Gospel has not been proclaimed.

If anyone would like more information about adopting the Banta Themne unreached people, or becoming a prayer partner for them, please contact me at lori5621@iname.com.

I am proud to be a Mississippian and know that churches there want to do all that they can to impact the world for Christ.

Lori Dean Funderburk
Ivory Coast, West Africa

REWARDING YEAR

Editor:

The year 2000 was a very busy and rewarding one for First Church, Brooklyn.

We had 49 members added to our church roll. We are looking forward to another exciting year.

We had our own missionary to the Ukraine, Clif Evans. He brought back a glowing report and many slides to share with the church.

This went along with our Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. On behalf of the church, the Woman's Missionary Union director pre-

sented a check for \$3,004 to be given to international missions.

This doubled our goal. The young people made posters about missions and displayed them throughout the church.

We also have a new youth director, Tommy Davis. We are starting a new study in discipleship training entitled, Walking in the Spirit.

This is taught by our pastor James Taylor, who is celebrating his eighth year at First Church, Brooklyn.

Leon Essary
Brooklyn

GREAT BURDEN

Editor:

I am writing concerning a great burden that I have for our retired ministers and their wives.

In every church I've pastored, but one, we have been fortunate to have a retired minister or wife in our congregation.

Most of these participated in the old A plan for retirement and all received very little from it. Fortunately most had other income from other retirement plans.

The church we are at now

has [as a member] a retired pastor's widow. She never worked outside the home and therefore survives on a meager income from social security and the old A plan.

She was contacted by our state convention to apply for help which would only be \$50 a month. She did and was denied help because they said she has too much.

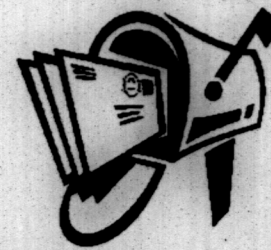
Our church, hearing of this, adopted her and supports her well beyond the state amount.

My concern is that several of our leaders in our state and national conventions are rumored to be making in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Is this true?

Where can we find out what we are paying for these high positions? God teaches us to take care of the widows and orphans. I believe that goes double for his faithful servants.

I'm ashamed to think that we have people who served so many years who now are struggling to survive when we can pay outrageous salaries. That goes against all that the Bible teaches. Shame on us.

Yann Windom
Roxie



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Blue Mountain College department of speech and theatre will present John Patrick's play, *The Curious Savage*, as its spring production. The production will open on Feb. 13 and will run through Feb. 17. All performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Garrett Fine Arts Center on campus. For additional information and reservations, call (662) 685-4771 ext. 131.

William Carey College's (WCC) 2001 Portfolio/Scholarship Day will be held on March 3 at WCC on the coast in Gulfport for talented art students. Activities will begin at 9 a.m., with registration at Parker Hall, and concludes in the early afternoon. For more information and a complete schedule of events, contact the art department at (228) 897-7120.

Mississippi College Art Faculty Exhibit is being held through Feb. 16 at Hinds Community College in the Marie Hull Gallery. Artwork on display includes hand-made paper, oil paintings, charcoal drawings, pottery, sculptures, and pencil drawings from a mission trip to Africa. Participants in the exhibit include: Randy Miley, Steve Cook, Ruth Glaze, Steve Glaze, Sam Gore, Kenneth Quinn, Stephanie Busbee, Mary Lane Reed, Albert Smathers, Sandy Anderson, Robert Sugg, and Diane Pamela Smith. The Marie Hull Gallery is open Mon.-Thurs., 8 a.m.-3 p.m. and Fri., 8 a.m.-noon. For more information, call the Art Department at Mississippi College, (601) 925-3231 or at Hinds Community College, (601) 857-3275.

Mississippi College (MC) BSU director, Christy Carley, associate, Thomas Herrington, and six MC students traveled to Southeast Asia in January to meet and interact with Asian university students. The MC students taught English as a Second Language (ESL) through songs, games, and skits in one of the universities in the area as well as in the student center. The student center, provided by the International Mission Board, is a place where believers and non-believers can fellowship with each other on a daily basis. The MC students making the trip, included John Davis from Rayville, La.; Brooke Eversmeyer from Jackson; David Huey from Memphis, Tenn.; Kara Loper from Philadelphia; Lindsey Melton from Greenville; and Jill Parker from Brandon.

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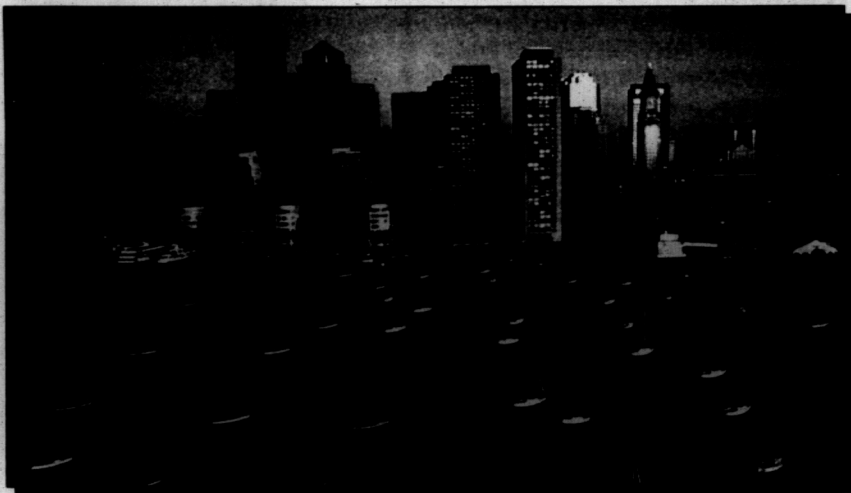
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Revival date
Liberty (Camp) Feb. 11-14; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Sonny Adkins, director, Evangelism Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Riley Ainsworth, pastor.

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Outreach efforts focus on Boston, Las Vegas

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Boston and Las Vegas — The two cities represent in many ways two of our nation's



BOSTON — "Hearts For Boston" will focus Southern Baptist church planting, evangelism, and church-strengthening efforts this year in one of the nation's most important financial, educational, and cultural centers. (Photo courtesy of Greater Boston Convention and Visitor's Bureau)

Boston facts

- * Metropolitan population: Approximately 3.3 million.
- * Boston itself comprises only 46 square miles, an unusually small land area for a city its size. One-fourth of that area is water.
- * Boston is a cosmopolitan culture, with a particularly important role in the American Revolution. It remains one of the nation's most important centers of education, culture, science and medicine.

Las Vegas facts

- * Metropolitan Population: Approximately 1.4 million.
- * First settled by Mormons in 1855; who abandoned the site two years later.
- * Gambling legalized in 1931, which together with the construction of the Hoover Dam and formation of Lake Mead helped the city become a major vacation destination. Rapid growth began in the late 1940s and 1950s. New casinos and huge casinos in the 1970s brought further economic boom.
- * Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov

"Las Vegas is one of the newest and fastest-growing major cities, less traditional in its customs and history than Boston. And I think that diversity mirrors the challenge we have across North America," said Robert E. Reccord, president of the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

In Boston, the approach has been to work with existing churches and ministries in determining which methods for outreach will have the best long-term impact, said Ignatius Meimaris, director of missions for the Greater Boston Baptist Association.

"We want to see Hearts for Boston as not an emphasis that culminates in 2001, but rather as an opportunity for us to kick off all types of evangelistic and church-planting processes," he said. "Although in Strategic Focus Cities terms we talk about 2001 as a year of implementation, I am looking at it in terms of the year of initiation."

The citywide events will include ministry to fans along the route of the Boston Marathon, coordinating efforts of churches offering such ministries as parking, water, shelters, and volunteers providing crowd control.

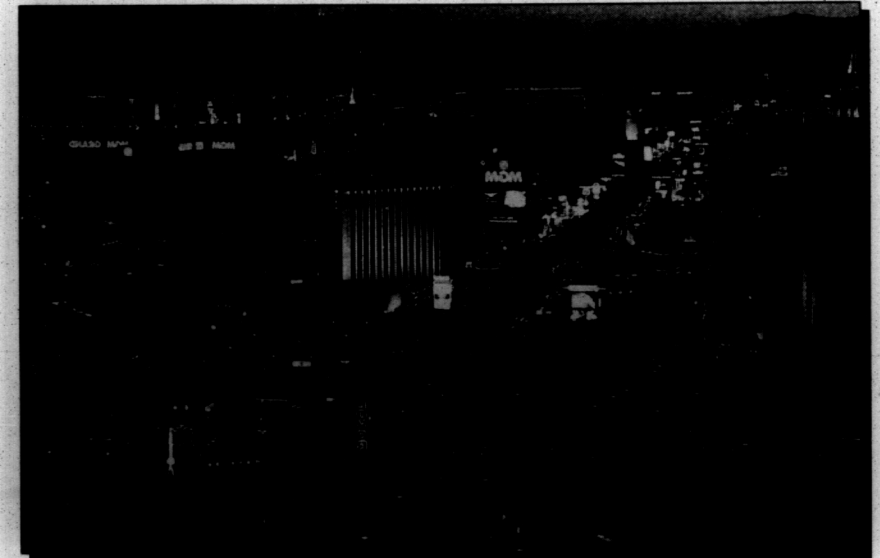
Also, during the month of July plans call for a continuous presence by Southern Baptist volunteers in Boston Commons, the city's most well known public park. Many of the volunteers will provide entertainment-based evangelism through musical groups or clowns, while others will pass out tourism guides to the city that include information about the gospel of Christ.

Other areas of activity include the full roster of church-based ministry — block parties, backyard Bible clubs, Scripture distribution, survey work, literacy training, food and clothing distribution, and other efforts.

"I think one of the neatest things that's happening in Boston is with our student work," said Bob Moore, NAMB strategy coordinator for the effort. A full-time campus evangelism missionary is working

with local churches to help establish Christian clubs on school campuses. "We're into about 15 high schools now and growing," he said.

Local leaders also have set a goal of planting 20 churches in the Boston area, a significant increase in the 74 Southern Baptist churches already in place. Prestonwood Church in suburban Dallas and First Church of Euless, Texas, are key partners in the church-planting effort.



VEGAS — The Las Vegas Strip of Casinos and hotels is what comes to mind for many when they think of Las Vegas, but Southern Baptists' "Loving Las Vegas" evangelism and church planting effort this year will focus more on the people that live and work in the city than the tourists. (Photo courtesy of Las Vegas News Bureau)

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH seeks immediate full-time pastor. Send resumes to Search Committee c/o Hillside Baptist Church, 2436 9th Avenue, Greeley, CO 80631. Hillsidebaptist@juno.com.

MINISTER OF CHILDREN/CHILDREN'S PASTOR: Zion Baptist Church is a purpose driven Southern Baptist church in northwestern Kentucky seeking a full-time leader for children's ministries, birth through grade 6. Candidates should possess vibrant people skills and strong administrative and leadership gifts. Must also demonstrate a genuine call of God, a mature personal relationship with Jesus, and a servant's heart. Send resume to ZBC Search Committee, Zion Baptist Church, 8158 HWY 351, Henderson, KY 42420. Call (270) 830-8053 or e-mail edavis@henderson.net. Website: www.zionbaptist.org.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, DURANT, MISS., is seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Send resume to Rev. Dan Watts, 132 W. Mulberry Street, Durant, MS 39063. For more information call the church at (662) 653-3105.

SYLVARENA BAPTIST CHURCH, Sylvarena, Miss., is now accepting resumes for the part-time position of Minister of Music. Please address inquiries and resumes to Robin Risher, Pastor, Route 2 Box 151, Raleigh, MS 39153.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Taking Jesus at his word

John 4:43-54

By Sharon Neff

A few years ago, Bette Midler had a song that had a beautiful melody and what seemed at first glance to be Christian lyrics. The chorus repeated the phrase that said God is watching us, which is a good and true sentiment. However, it ended by saying that he is watching us from a distance, implying a lack of personal involvement.

Uh-oh. That discounts his omnipresence and omnipotence (and all those other "omni's," as a friend of mine once said).

Unfortunately, that is the feeling that many people have about God. They might believe that he created the world, and

that he watches his creation; but that he is distant and doesn't really have any power or influence over what goes on in the world.

They might also believe that Jesus had power when he was here on earth, but that since he is not physically present now, the power is gone or diminished. Why should they believe more when there is seemingly no concrete evidence to believe?

The obvious answer to those of us who are his children is that we believe because God gave us his promises throughout his Word. Jesus gave us his word many times in the New Testament that he would always be with us, that he



Neff

would give us power and work in our lives. So we take him at his word, and we trust him.

In today's world, taking someone at his or her word can be a risky business. How many times have we discovered that elected officials or other leaders were not telling the truth? How many times have we learned that officers of large corporations were not honest?

Haven't most of us even had personal business dealings or some sort of relationship with someone who turned out to be untrustworthy? It takes a leap of faith to trust someone.

Well, that's exactly what it takes to believe and trust Christ when there is no tangible evidence to do so. That's what it takes to depend on his power and his help when we can't see with our physical eyes any reason to do so.

The official who was seeking healing for his son as recorded in John 4 took a leap of faith when he asked Jesus to help him.

At first, the official just took what could be considered a step of faith when he asked Jesus to come home with him and heal his son. The official had enough faith to ask, but felt that Jesus' power was limited by distance. He thought that Jesus had to be physically present with his son to heal him.

Then the official took the leap. When Jesus said, "You may go. Your son will live" (v. 50), the man believed and acted on his belief. The same verse records that "the man took Jesus at his word and departed." He now had enough faith to believe and trust that what Jesus said was true.

When he headed for home, he couldn't make a quick call on his cell phone to confirm that his son was indeed getting

better. Jesus did not give him a supernatural vision that his son was healed. There was no tangible evidence to prove to him that his plea had been successful. Yet he still "took Jesus at his word."

The official's leap of faith was rewarded tangibly only later. As he was returning home, acting on his faith, he was met by servants reporting that indeed his son was recovering. Upon questioning them, he discovered that the turning point came "at the exact time" (v. 53) that Jesus had said the boy would live.

Let us never forget that God is watching us, but not from a distance. He is here with us, among us, even when our physical eyes may not be able to see him. Jesus' power and help is available to us and we can act by faith on what he has said because he is trustworthy.

Neff is a member of First Church, Greenville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Responding to the Gospel

Acts 26:15-32

By Lee Yancey

Tucked away in a Caesarean prison for more than two years, Paul had ample time to prepare his defense. When Festus intended to do the Jews a favor and turn Paul over to them to be tried, Paul had no choice but to "appeal to Caesar."

The Jews would have killed him. While waiting to transfer Paul to Rome, Festus conferred with King Herod Agrippa II (hereafter referred to as King Agrippa) about Paul's case. King Agrippa decided that he wanted to hear Paul present his case and today's lesson focuses upon Paul sharing the Gospel with him.

Divine appointment (vv. 15-18). On the way to Damascus Paul had seen the Light, transforming his life forever. In testifying before King Agrippa, Paul used Jesus' own words to explain how he had been called

to serve and witness about him and to help make salvation known to both Jews and Gentiles.

This divine appointment between Jesus and Paul was the turning point in his life. No longer would he be persecuting Christians; now he would be a persecuted Christian who was trying to bring as many people as possible to Christ before his inevitable violent death.

When unbelievers see Christians today, they are not concerned with what they say as much as how they live. When people see that we walk the walk every day, then we can be an encouragement to them as they consider seriously the claims of Christ.

Definitive Gospel (vv. 19-23). From the time Paul had received the Gospel, he had not hesitated to preach to anyone who would listen (and to some



Yancey

who would not) regardless of race, sex, geography, or social status.

In Caesarea, Paul thanked God that he could speak to the King about Jesus. Because King Agrippa was familiar with Judaism and somewhat with Christianity, Paul knew that what he was saying was sinking in.

Basing his message on what Moses and the prophets had foretold linked his message to the Messianic hope of Judaism. In God's promise to Abraham, all the people of the world would be blessed as a result of Abraham's faithfulness to God.

The Gentiles were being blessed by being allowed to accept Christ as Lord. The Gospel is relevant to all people regardless of their geographic, racial, or social backgrounds.

Decisive question (vv. 26-27). In verse 26, Paul makes the comment that none of the Jewish-Christian problems had escaped Herod Agrippa's notice because they were "not done in a corner."

Herod Agrippa was the grandson of Herod the Great,

the crazy, family-murdering, master builder who had all the babies killed around the time of Jesus' birth. Herod Agrippa had been aware of Jesus, his miracles, and the followers of the Way for most of his life. His uncle had killed John the Baptist and mocked Jesus at his trial when he refused to do a miracle for him (see Luke 23:8).

No, Agrippa was not getting a crash course in Christianity; he already knew about it. Paul, never one to be indirect, asked him straight out, "King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know you do."

By going back a few verses we see what Paul was driving at: Verse 22b-23 says "I am saying nothing beyond what Moses and the Prophets said would happen — that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

What Paul was really asking Agrippa was: Do you believe Jesus is the Christ? We need to be bold in asking people to receive the Gospel as well. A presentation of the Gospel is an

invitation for someone to receive Christ.

Disastrous response (vv. 28-32). The NIV translates verse 28 as: "Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?'" The KJV says, "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'"

The context of the passage and the Greek interpretation agree more with the NIV translation. In any case, Agrippa falls short of accepting Christ as his Savior. Afterwards Paul boldly stated that he prayed that all present might become Christians.

Having heard enough, Agrippa and Festus left the room and privately agreed that Paul had done nothing to deserve death or imprisonment. Like Agrippa, all unbelievers have an immediate opportunity to respond to the Gospel when it is presented to them.

Some repent of their sins and receive Christ by faith. Some do not.

Yancey is consultant for the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital pictures are not acceptable. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) flash-and-a-half flash floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Write news and photographs to: Baptist Record, P.O. Box 1000, Natchez, MS 39121. E-mail: baptistreord@mbc.org.

Bibliocipher

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OWZ XAN UWZM WO
PWM BE IHBLR, CKM
JWUNZOHS, CKM EACZJNZ
XACK CKT XUWNMPNM
EUWZM, JBNZLBKP NQNK
XW XAN MBQBMBKP
CEHKMNZ WO EWHS
CKM EJBZBX, CKM WO
XAN DWBKXE CKM GCZZ-
WU, CKM BE C
MBELNZKNZ WO XAN
XAWHPAXE CKM BKXNKXE
WO XAN ANCZX.

ANFZNOE OWHZ:

XUNSQN

Clue: U = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: James One: Thirteen.

'Bread of Life' feeds, ministers in Serbia

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (BP) — As the Serbian people face their first winter with a new democratically elected government, evangelicals are scrambling to minister to a nation left nearly bankrupt, according to a key evangelical ministry based in Belgrade.

Jasmina Tosic is co-director of Bread of Life, a ministry that has largely focused on refugee aid during the Balkan conflicts of the 1990's. She laid out a plan to meet the physical and spiritual needs of more than 15,000 Serbian families this winter.

The Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund is among Bread of Life's sources of physical and spiritual needs of more than 15,000 Serbian families this winter.

However, Tosic wrote in the ministry's newsletter, Bread of Life has received only a few offers of outside help for the plan.

"We are putting our trust in God and find ourselves continuing as written in Haggai 'giving careful thought' about our past and future," Tosic, a member of



JASMINA TOSIC — Jasmina Tosic, co-director of Bread of Life, a ministry that has largely focused on refugee aid during the Balkan conflicts of the 1990's, laid out a plan to meet the physical and spiritual needs of more than 15,000 Serbian families this winter. (BP Photo)

First Church, Belgrade, wrote.

The organization's winter ministry plan includes:

- a monthly distribution of food and hygiene items.
- one-time distribution of stoves and firewood, shoes and socks, clothing, underwear, jackets, blankets and bed

holes for basic needs like electricity, food, and pensions.

The West has been caught unprepared to offer quick help, The New York Times reported in a November article.

Serbian officials say they need \$500 million in energy, food, medicine, and pension support to get through the winter.

linens, and minor renovations of living accommodations.

- 30 children's workshops to provide one-time food and hygiene aid and ongoing psychosocial programs for children.

- a home care ministry to provide visits to indigent persons with special needs, particularly health and psychological needs.

- an ongoing self-reliance program that runs alongside the emergency aid program to provide a foundation for the future.

Since a democratic election knocked the nation's longtime despot Slobodan Milosevic out of power in October, the new government has discovered large budget

Baptist witness finds open door in Yugoslavia

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (BP) — Through a decade of political turmoil, Southern Baptists have offered hope and help to refugees in Yugoslavia, laying a foundation of goodwill with both authorities and the people.

Now the opportunities to share God's love through Christian ministry are increasing as Yugoslavia's government moves back into the world community.

In 1990, the International Mission Board began assisting

the Bread of Life ministry in Belgrade and the Love Your Neighbor work in Nis. In just the last two years, the board has provided \$400,000 to both ministries, said Jim Brown, a human needs consultant for the International Mission Board.

The ministries provide food and stoves for refugee families, and they hope to begin job skill training and agriculture projects for the families. Many of them have been forced from their homes three or four times, Brown said.

"Some went from a home with five or 10 acres to a one-room building that used to house pigs and cows," he said.

But despite their circumstances, Brown said Christian refugees do not express bitterness or anger. On a recent trip to Serbia, he often heard refugees say, "God has turned Serbia upside down to get the people's focus back upon God and on who he really is and how he loves us."

The human needs ministries have increased Baptists' reputations in the cities of Belgrade and Nis. Cedo, a Baptist pastor in Nis who organizes Love Your Neighbor, has formed unique relationships with medical authorities, city officials, and the new mayor, Brown said.

"The new mayor, who had

only been in office for two or three days, had already heard about Cedo and his credible ministry because of helping out the refugees," Brown said.

City officials in Nis have offered the use of city property so Baptist work with the Kosovar refugees can expand further.

"People are coming to realize who Baptists are, that Baptists care and Baptists want to share the love of Jesus with folks," Brown said.

Because Baptists have met the physical needs of refugees, people are more receptive to hearing the gospel, Brown said. In fact, the Bread of Life ministry has reached enough people in the city that dozens of churches could be started among the new Christians. But the people need leaders, church planters, and discipleship leaders to mobilize the believers, he said.

The effect of the ministry also is spreading into other countries. Bread of Life and Love Your Neighbor workers share the gospel with refugees or internally displaced people, such as Kosovars. When the refugees return to their homelands, they take the message of Jesus Christ with them. Brown compares the movement to the early church depicted in the Book of Acts.